

liver on the left side, that due to the spleen on the right side; resonance from the cardiac extremity of the stomach on the right side; the respiration in the left infra-clavicular region resembled that usually heard on the right side—in other words, it was of the character described by Flint as broncho-vesicular. This region likewise furnished us with more marked vocal resonance and vocal fremitus than the corresponding region on the right side. To detect the position of the sigmoid flexure the following method was adopted: the right iliac region was percussed and found to be resonant; a large injection of water was then administered, and it was again percussed and found to be dull; and the dullness again gave place to resonance when the injection was passed. The rectum on exploration was found to ascend towards the right side and the right testicle to hang lower than the left. The man is not left handed.

I may add that several other physicians have examined the case, and that all of them are entirely satisfied that transposition exists.

DOMESTIC SUMMARY.

Physiological Action of Caffein and Thein.—In our No. for April last, p. 525, we gave the results of the experiments of M. Leven in regard to the physiological action of caffein, and in our present No., p. 260, will be found the conclusions of the same experimenter in regard to the action of thein.

The *Boston Med. and Surg. Journal* (May 28, 1868) contains an account of a number of experiments made by Dr. R. AMORY with the assistance of Mr. FITZ, with these same alkaloids. The animals experimented on were guinea pigs, cats, dogs, pigeons, and rabbits. The following are Dr. Amory's conclusions from his experiments:—

"1. That this drug poisons by exhausting the muscular contractility throughout the body, and affecting last of all the muscles of the heart.

"2. That the spinal cord is that part of the nervous system principally affected, as shown by the convulsions in all the experiments, and, most conclusively, in these last experiments where the posterior train was not convulsed.

"To these I might add another effect: that the involuntary as well as the voluntary muscles were stimulated and exhausted till their death or loss of power, as shown by the continued discharges from the bowels and bladder, as well as the quickening and, secondarily, impairment of circulation and respiration.

"With regard to its use as a therapeutic agent, there is much to say. It can be used where we wish to stimulate muscular and nervous action. So powerful an agent must also be used cautiously, and the abuse of coffee and tea should be guarded against. I should hope, from its peculiar action, that it may be useful in opium poisoning, and it is known that coffee after a dose of opium is very refreshing. But it must be remembered that though the primary action is excitant, the secondary action is depressant. It should also be borne in mind that coffee little roasted is soothing, and when over-roasted exciting to the nervous system. The dose of caffein, as used by Prof. Oppolzer in cases of nervous headache and hemicrania, is one grain combined with an equal weight of quinine, as Dr. F. B. Greenough lately informed me."

Gunshot Wound of the Knee-Joint with Fracture of the Patella.—Dr. JAS. J. ROOKER, of Castleton, Ind., records (*Western Journ. Med.*, May, 1868) the case of a farmer æt. 40, in good health, who was accidentally shot in the knee-joint Sept. 10, 1866. The ball entered the inside of the right knee, fracturing the patella into five pieces, and passing upwards and backwards, lodged in the thigh. An examination was made by several physicians, and every justifiable means to extract the ball having been used without success it was determined to apply cold water-dressings and to "trust to nature." Dr. R. saw the patient

an hour after the accident, and had him subsequently in charge. The following day the patient was removed home twelve miles distant, his leg was placed in a fracture-box with his heel elevated, and ice water-dressings with an opiate at night constituted the treatment. This was continued for three weeks, after which the limb was put into splints in which it remained for two months. There was no suppuration. On Nov. 1, 1867, Dr. R. says the patient was in excellent health, and able to follow his occupation; the fragments of patella have united by short ligamentous union.

Ring Treatment of Fractures of the Patella.—Prof. BLACKMAN states (*Western Journ. Med.*, May, 1868) that he has successfully treated a case of fractured patella by means of the ring as lately recommended and employed by Dr. W. A. GIBSON, of St. Louis (see No. of this Journal for Jan. 1867, p. 281), and with his characteristic learning, he shows that this mode of treatment, of late years entirely forgotten, has a very ancient origin. It was employed by Albucasis, and approved by Guy de Chauliac, J. de Vigo, and Bassuet, who adopted it at the Hôtel Dieu of Paris, in the latter half of the 18th century. Permanus' ring, the little hat of Meibomius, and the wooden cap of Karltschmidt, all of which are referred to by Malgaigne (*Treatise on Fractures*), are of the same character. Heister, also, in his great work on surgery, published in 1739, which may be referred to by modern surgeons with advantage, states that he used with success the ring treatment by means of a perforated plaster, intended to include and hold fast the fractured knee-pan after it was set.

Iron Rod Projected through Head; Recovery.—Dr. M. JEWETT, of Middlebury, Ohio, records (*Western Journ. Med.*, March, 1868) the case of a Frenchman 27 years of age, who, while blasting coal, was struck by the blasting barrel (a $\frac{5}{8}$ inch gas pipe four feet long) near the external angle of the superciliary ridge of the right side, and in its course it passed through the bone, fracturing the orbital plate through the right anterior lobe of the brain, lacerating the longitudinal sinus through the left middle lobe, and emerged at a point about an inch and a half above and behind the left ear. The rod lodged after entering about one-half its length, and was extracted by his companions not without considerable difficulty and force, owing to a bend in a portion of the rod in the patient's skull. For several days he was almost entirely comatose. Cold was applied to head, his bowels kept open by large doses of podophyllum and calomel, "the wound was kept open by frequent deep probings," and the head so placed as to favour drainage. Fragments of bone, coagulated blood, and broken up brain tissues, were freely discharged. About the twelfth day he began to show signs of consciousness, took nourishment, and at times seemed to comprehend what was said to him. "He gradually improved after the third week, and in eight weeks from the time of receiving the injury, was able to leave his bed. There was, at no time, any marked paralysis.

Physically, he now seems as well as ever. He seems to be perfectly rational, and will reply correctly in *monosyllables* to questions, but is entirely unable to *connect words*. He succeeds best, when excited, in swearing in French. This difficulty shows that that portion of the brain controlling speech was seriously and probably irreparably injured. Up to this date, January 24, 1868, over eight months from the injury, he shows no improvement in this particular. The amount of mental power is also much impaired.

A somewhat similar case is recorded by Dr. Bigelow, in the number of this Journal for July, 1850.

Bromide of Potassium.—By referring to the Transactions of the College of Physicians, published in the present No. of this Journal, it will be seen that Dr. Packard stated at the meeting on the 5th of June, 1867, that he had employed successfully in several cases the bromide of potassium in the sickness of pregnancy. Dr. D. W. HODGKINS relates (*Boston Medical and Surg. Journ.*, April 9, 1868) a case of morning sickness of pregnancy cured by the same means. He gave a dessertspoonful every two hours of a solution of half an ounce of bromide of potassium in four ounces of water.